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IN MEMORIAM.

Mrs. Harriet Newell Plummer.



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HARRIET NEWELL THWING was born May 5, 1818, at West Brookfield, Mass. She was the first born of a young couple who were active members of the Congregational Church. The era of modern missions had just begun. The first Sunday School in Central Massachusetts had just been started there, not without opposition—being gathered by the young cabinetmaker Thomas Thwing in his own house. Two days before the birth of this daughter, May 3, he writes, "Mr. Phelps has this day from the pulpit supported the cause of S. S. instruction and proposed to open the School again in this place." A revival followed this and other means of grace and at two communion seasons 82 were received to the church. Harriet Newell may be said to have thus been born into a revival. Her earliest impressions were stamped by its power. The atmosphere of her home also was thoroughly religious. Her mother was quiet and meditative, but her father was zealous, ardent and aggressive. He was full of missionary fervor and longed to see the church aroused.

The name Harriet Newell was given our friend by her father, who writes, "Next to the Bible there was no book I was more delighted in than the Memoir of Harriet Newell." He was moved to start a monthly missionary concert of prayer Dec. 1815, about the first in this country, seven months before it was begun in Boston, at Park St. Church. Among the brethren in that little company whose cooperation he secured was Daniel Chamberlain, one of the first missionaries that sailed for the Sandwich Islands.

Strange as it may now seem, evening prayer meetings

then were not favored by the pastors and were violently opposed by others. Much of the time only two adults and four young persons came to the house of Thomas Thwing week by week to pray. The aged pastor whom he consulted before appointing the service said that he hoped the meetings with proper care would do no harm, though he "doubted the propriety of bringing the sexes together in the night time."

The opposition to the innovation was so great that fifty persons agreed to withhold their parish dues unless the Pastor suppressed these meetings. Yet certain members of this same church, says the journal from which we quote, indulged in ball room pleasures in the night time. It seemed proper to dance but not to pray.

The weekly meeting and the missionary concert, however, went on and a powerful revival came as a grand cure-all. Before Harriet Newell was two years of age her parents were accepted by the American Board as missionary laborers. Mrs. Thwing soon after was brought near to the grave by severe illness, and so this longed for employment was abandoned. Two pagans however came to them from the Sandwich Islands and joined Mr. Thwing's S. S. class. They learned there the English alphabet, became Christians, and one returned, years after, to take a position of importance in the Islands.

Missionary themes were constantly kept before the thought of this young daughter. She was receiving a spiritual preparation for her future work. She happily had inherited a vigorous constitution. She was also blessed with a sanguine temperament and buoyancy of spirits that created a sunny, cheerful atmosphere wherever she went. Keenly alive to impressions, ardent in sympathy, impulsive, magnetic, with a pleasant voice and fluent speech, she won the admiring friendship of all who came under her influence. These natural graces were consecrated to Christ in girlhood and became effective allies in the development of a character of pronounced and commanding piety.

Like her parents, she early took her place in the house of God among the singers, and all her life enjoyed with special zest the practice of sacred music. Some sixty, at one time, were associated as a choir of Christian singers at Salem Church and their weekly rehearsals were opened and closed with prayer. A recess midway was allowed for social intercourse. Not a few friendships were formed here, that ripened into marriage. It was in this musical circle that James Adams Plummer made her acquaintance, a young man from Maine of marked natural refinement, modesty and christian worth ; who felt, as he himself afterwards said, the power of her eye, the first time they met. They were married by Dr. Edward Beecher 1845. They removed to the South a few years later and were in Savannah during the Yellow Fever epidemic 1854. Both were seized with the malady. Mr. Plummer died and his wife, as soon as sufficiently recovered from the disease, came home to Boston and for fifteen years gave herself to the toilful work of a city missionary. For six months she was Matron of the "Home for Little Wanderers," Baldwin Place. In 1871 she removed to Chelsea, making her home with her sister, Mrs. Albert C. Worth, No. 3 Lynn street. Mr. Worth died September 5th, 1875, widely lamented. Mrs. Plummer for some time was engaged in Sunday School and other Christian work, as far as household duties permitted.

When by increasing years and infirmities she was laid aside from active service, her pen was not idle in correspondence with those whose religious welfare lay near her heart. Old beneficiaries whom she had served in her missionary work, young men in the ministry, or preparing for it, and other christian workers will remember her written words of cheer. Her heroic demeanor in the hospital won the admiration of surgeons and nurses. She lay down to take the anæsthetic with quiet cheerfulness, repeating to herself a favorite lyric beginning

"I know not what will befall me,
 God hangs a mist o'er my eyes.
 * * * Tis blessed not to know :
 It stills me in those mighty arms
 Which will not let me go."

Her first words, waking to consciousness after a serious operation had been performed, were an ejaculation of sympathy for another patient in an adjoining room whose moan of pain led her to forget her own. A few weeks later, as soon as she was allowed to sit up and use a pencil she wrote to Professor Thwing, her brother in Brooklyn, a touching narrative of God's dealings, full of thankfulness and joy.

"I have become more acquainted with my Saviour while lying here," was one of the striking expressions of that letter which showed the gracious fruitage of God's surgery of sorrow to which He had subjected her.

But once did she enter church after her second return from the hospital. That was at the July sacrament. During these seven months of exile from the courts of the Lord which she loved so well, her affection for the church was only intensified. Incoherent soliloquies that attended the decadence of consciousness a few days before death, expressed desire for the place of prayer, regret at weariness that prevented, and the wish that her sister might go in her stead.

The writings of Miss Havergal were much enjoyed. Among her last readings was the hymn :

"I take this pain, Lord Jesus, as thine own gift,
 And true, though tremulous praises I now uplift.
 I am too weak to sing them, but thou dost hear
 The whisper from my pillow, Thou art so near!"

At one time the suffering invalid remarked "I am tired of prose, read me a hymn." "I am with thee" by Miss Havergal, was read from "Loyal Responses." This little volume she had marked with pencil and added "Amen" to some of the lyric prayers, as where the author says "stablish thy kingdom in my heart." This seemed to be her hourly prayer. Passages indicative of self-renuncia-

tion and disavowal of personal merit, aspiratious after holiness and simple trust in Christ are underlined throughout this well-thumbed book. Thus she learned "the tenderness of his enfolding and the faithfulness of his upholding" until his work in her was complete.

The immediate cause of her death was fatty degeneration of the heart and other organs, as shown by autopsy. This was associated with severe sciatica, which was the occasion of acute pain continually.

The music of the organ soothed her at times. The last Sunday her brother spent with her the week before her death, she said when he ceased singing, "Play more, Edward, it makes me forget my sufferings." He read to her Heb. 12 of the blessed fruits of chastisement, and in Revelation of the heavenly world where are gathered those who have come out of great tribulation. On leaving, he bade her take his loving salutations to their mother, which she received with a quiet smile, saying she had heard him send that message before by some who were hastening on to the heavenly town.

When she became more and more unconscious of what was going on about her it was difficult to rouse her attention. At one of these times her pastor called. The mention of his name seemed to recall her senses and with a gesture he never will forget she exclaimed, "My dear pastor!"

During the last week she was in a dying condition, and the last two days was insensible, so that she passed away, February 14th, 1885, as did her parents—silently, to her rest. Their lives were a more instructive lesson than any dying words would have been.

Brief religious services were held at her late residence, No. 3 Lynn street, Monday, February 16th, at 1 P. M. The hymn beginning "Art thou weary" was sung to "Stephanus" by a trio, Misses M. T. Dinnin, H. Jeffers and S. Jones. The pastor, Rev. F. W. Baldwin, then offered prayer,

giving thanks for "Sorrow vanquished, labor ended, Jordan passed !"

The remains were then taken to the First Congregational Church. A large number of friends, from far and near, gathered in the lecture room, and were addressed by the Pastor and by Rev. S. P. Fay, of Dorchester. The music was in charge of Miss Jennie B. Buck. The hymn was sung, beginning "For me to live is Christ," tune "Rialto." The remarks of the Pastor are embodied in the sketch already given, being prefaced by the suggestive thought, "We honor ourselves, and the faith we profess, by this tribute of respect which we pay to one whose life so beautifully exemplified the renewing grace of God." Mr Baldwin added :—

"Rarely has it been my lot to know one with so much of the sweetness and heroism of Christian faith. She never lost her happy smile, or her words of joy and love, but her faith seemed to grow brighter as the fiery trial grew more intense. Blessed as her active life has been, her sickness also has been a blessing to many. Not only has she left us the memory of a well-spent life, but she has opened to us the vision of that life continued and perfected above, in the high offices and full energies of heaven. May we who remain, live as faithfully, and be loved as sincerely, and may her exemplary life be a star in our heavens, to guide us when the way is dark."

Rev. S. P. Fay of Boston remarked :—

This is not the time for tears. Death has its bitter and terrible aspects but not when a Christian dies. That is an hour of triumph and of joy. As I look on this face what a crowd of memories rush before me! Twenty years ago I stood with this sister at Mt. Auburn beside the open grave of her mother. How fondly she loved that mother I well know, but her face was joyful not sad. There was an emphasis of gladness and of hope in that father's voice as he pointed with his staff to the green sod by the body of his wife, "I am to lie there!" As there was joy then, not tears, so now we may rejoice in the completion of this well-rounded life.

As her pastor, I knew Mrs. Plummer four years intimately. She was then healthful, strong, zealous. I do not remember ever seeing her despondent, or ready to give up. It was a tonic to me when wearied, to feel the buoyant life that welled up in her. I sometimes followed her to cellar or attic in her visits. The last message I had from her, perhaps two years ago, was a request to visit a suffering saint

in Somerville in whose welfare she was deeply interested. In that sufferer's heart I found the most intense affection for her benefactor.

Two loves fired this woman's spirit, love to her Saviour and love to dying souls. She was full of faith, therefore faithful. She believed in God's word thoroughly ; in a personal Saviour and in a personal sanctifier, the Holy Spirit. She had no confidence in her own merits. What an example do we have here of what Christ can do for us. Is there one to-day who has not this faith, what a recommendation is presented in this faithful life.

Farewell dear sister in Christ! Thou hast ere this enjoyed the meeting and greeting of husband and parents, best of all, the welcome of the Master. May we follow thee as thou didst follow Him.

After prayer by Rev. Mr. Fay the hymn of Baxter, "Lord it belongs not to my care," was sung to "Arcadia." Before the benediction was pronounced, Rev. Dr. Thwing of Brooklyn, N. Y., remarked :—

Custom imposes silence on the mourners during the solemnities of burial, but I feel moved so far to break through this frigid formality as to express, in behalf of myself and widowed sister, our sense of personal obligation to the pastor, officers and many members of this church and to other friends and neighbors whose unwearied ministry of love has alleviated and brightened the painful and protracted illness of the deceased, certifying to the truth of scripture, "Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off." Prov. 29, 10. May He who is not unrighteous to forget deeds of love in His name, give you all an abundant reward in your own hearts and homes and make you all finally sharers, with her, in the glory of His beatific vision above!

The remains were interred at Mt. Auburn. An elaborate floral wreath with the inscription "Our Teacher" from six former pupils was left upon the grave ; their names were Misses K. S. Marden, A. M. Swan, C. E. Taylor, and E. L. Burwell ; Mrs. J. E. Haskell and Mrs. S. E. Millikin.

This floral gift was a silent token of their abiding affection. The orange blossoms on her pulseless breast had bloomed after her death on an orange tree given her just forty years ago by her betrothed, a lover's gift, still fresh and green. It has been tended with care, and before this had graced both bridal and burial with its pure and fragrant blossoms.

The following tributes will be read with interest :—

Dr. Edward Beecher, her pastor in early life, writes, “I have always regarded her with peculiar affection and confidence. Lovely in her disposition, devoted to the service of her Saviour, cheerful and hopeful in her anticipations, ever resolute and active in the cause of Christ, she brought the sunshine of love, hope and faith wherever she came. Her trials and bereavements purified her and brought her nearer to God. Now she has gone to see the Saviour face to face. We shall soon meet her.”

A former teacher, Rev. James C. White of Cincinnati, writes that his memories cover half a century. “I think I met her in Ware before her father became one of the famous Boston deacons at dear old Salem Church. It was however in that church I know her best. She was a member of what was known as Deacon White’s Bible Class. It averaged above 70 members, forty or fifty of whom joined the church while under my care. At the weekly prayer meetings of the class and in the instruction of its inquiring members, Harriet—I know very little of her as Mrs. Plummer—Harriet was an efficient helper. I remember her as Paul remembered Phœbe ‘a servant of the church.’

No less interested was I in her as a daughter and sister in the home circle. Always cheerful and contented, I never saw in her countenance a shade of sadness or heard a word of complaint or unfriendly criticism from her lips. The Master long ago said to her ‘Go work in my vineyard.’ She obeyed and wrought cheerfully and incessantly to the end. The cup of water to the poorest disciple of the Lord was as heartily given as was the alabaster box broken for the anointing of her Saviour. Both were love tokens of her own broken, loving heart. Truly her life was a benediction in the home, upon the homeless and churchless, among the dense, seething population of Boston. The battle of life was well fought and the crown faithfully won. Another of the precious daughters of Zion has gone to her reward.”

Dea. Andrew Cushing, Superintendent of City Missions,

writes in similar terms of her fifteen years of humble, toilsome work as missionary.

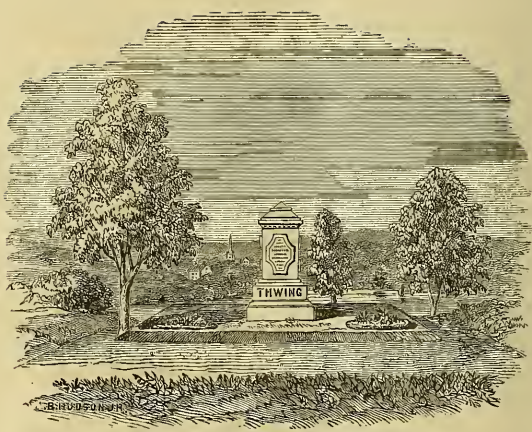
"The pleasant tones of her voice, the bright expression of her countenance and the warm grasp of her hand were a ready passport to the heart. Her memory will long be cherished by the poor to whom she ministered, into whose dark and desolate homes she brought sunshine, and by her co-laborers who loved and respected her and were often stimulated to greater activity by her example.

She shared largely the missionary spirit of her honored father and her consecrated life showed her worthy of her baptismal name."

Rev. John L. Sewall, a young pastor at Westminster, Vt., writes that the memory of her life and her personal helpfulness to him is a precious possession, from which he shall not part on earth, and which in heaven will be a part of his eternal "satisfaction." He rejoices that she who had "walked in darkness" has now "seen a great light"; and that upon her who "dwelt in the Land of the Shadow of Death hath the light shined." Letters of similar import were received from distant friends, both before and after the death of Mrs. Plummer, which need not be recorded here.

The remains reached the family burial place at Mount Auburn just as a fierce wintry storm of snow and rain began. No services were held. Having "beheld the sepulchre and how the body was laid," the mourners returned, recalling memories of seven previous visits to the spot, when the sod was green and the sky was warm; cherishing joyful anticipations of meeting in the summer land, where there is no more sorrow, darkness or death.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD.
THEY REST FROM THEIR LABORS,
THEIR WORKS FOLLOW THEM,



150 ST. MARKS AVE. BROOKLYN, N.
Edward Payson Thwing